

REMARKS

This paper is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on June 23, 2006. Claim 5 has been amended and claims 1-8 now remain in the application. In view of the foregoing amendments, as well as the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in complete condition for allowance and request reconsideration of the application in this regard.

The specification was objected to because the abstract of the disclosure used the word "comprises." The abstract has been amended to use the word "includes," as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-4, 6, 7, and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,315,436 to Schenk et al. ("Schenk") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,464,381 to Anderson, Jr. et al. ("Anderson"). In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts:

Regarding claims 1 and 8, Schenk et al. discloses an automotive interior trim assembly having a support [interior body structure of a vehicle], a storage compartment [11] having a compartment body with a first connecting member [19] integrally formed therein defining a cavity [13, 14] and an opening [15] with a second connecting member [22] integrally therein for gaining access to the cavity, the first connecting member [19] cooperating [transmitting and reflecting light] with the second connecting member, a cover [16] coupled to the compartment body [at 17] moveable between an open position and a closed position, and a shining lamp [18] molded to the compartment body to illuminate the cavity [13, 14] when the cover [16] is in the open position (figure 1, column 2 lines 40-65, column 3 lines 1-22). Schenk et al. does not clearly disclose the electroluminescent lamp.

Anderson, Jr. et al. discloses an electroluminescent lamp [12] in a vehicle interior lighting system (abstract, figure 9, column 2 lines 5-10).

(Office Action, pp. 2-3). Applicants respectfully disagree.

Schenk is directed to a storage compartment for a vehicle, and specifically, a glove compartment having a compartment housing (11) with two sections (13, 14) separated by a transverse wall (111). The housing (11) further includes an opening (15) that may be covered by a flap (16) pivotally connected to the lower side of the housing and movable between an open and closed position. A downwardly shining lamp (18) is located in the top wall (113) in the vicinity of the compartment opening (15). Fig. 1 only shows a transparent covering (19) and the remainder of the shining lamp (18) is apparently omitted from the figure. When the lamp is on, upper section (13) is illuminated but the lower section (14) remains dark as it is shaded by the transverse wall (111). To light the lower section (14), however, a reflector (22) is arranged on the inside of flap (16). In this way, when the flap (16) is in its opened position, light from shining lamp (18) is reflected into the lower section (14).

In regard to independent claim 1, as noted above, the Examiner asserts that Schenk discloses "a shining lamp [18] molded to the compartment body." (Office Action, p. 3). A careful reading of Schenk, however, indicates that Schenk fails to teach or suggest a "lamp molded to one of said compartment body and said cover," as recited in claim 1. Schenk provides almost no disclosure on the shining lamp. The extent of Schenk's disclosure on the shining lamp is contained in Col. 2, ln. 66-Col. 3, ln. 23. In this passage, Schenk discloses that the shining lamp is located in the top wall and has a covering that is flush with the inner surface of the top wall. The detailed aspects of the shining lamp are not provided in the specification or the drawings. This is because

Schenk omits the shining lamp from Fig. 1: "On the upper, transversely extending housing wall 113 there is arranged in the vicinity of the compartment opening 15 a downwardly shining lamp 18, of which FIG. 1 only shows a transparent covering 19..." (Col. 2, In. 66-Col. 3, In. 2). This relatively terse passage fails to teach or suggest any of the details of the shining lamp (18), including a molded connection between a lamp and the housing (111).

In addition, the compartment disclosed in Schenk is of the type discussed in the background of the present application and suffers from the drawbacks being addressed by the current invention. For instance, Schenk appears to discloses a compartment for which a cutout is made and then covered by a transparent material to essentially provide a window to the interior of the compartment. A separate light assembly is then attached to the compartment to be adjacent the window so as to shine light through the window. This type of lighting system is discussed in the present application. (see Para 5). Therefore, Schenk not only fails to teach or suggest a molded connection between the lamp and the compartment housing, but Schenk also fails to appreciate the problems and drawbacks that are being addressed by the present invention.

For these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Schenk fails to teach or suggest the combination of elements recited in independent claim 1 and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Moreover, as claims 2-4, 6, and 7 depend from allowable independent claim 1, for the reasons provided above, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable as well.

In regard to claim 8, Applicants do not fully understand the Examiner's rejection. In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that Schenk discloses a compartment body "with a first connecting member [19] integrally formed therein." (Office Action, p. 2). The Examiner further asserts that Schenk discloses "an opening [15] with a second connecting member [22] integrally therein." (Office Action, pp. 2-3). Thus, the Examiner asserts that the transparent covering (19) is a first connecting member and the reflector (22) is the second connecting member. In contrast, independent claim 8 recites a "compartment body including a first connecting member integrally formed therein"; and "a cover including a second connecting member integrally formed therein, said first connecting member cooperating with said second connecting member to couple said cover to said compartment body." Applicants respectfully disagree that the transparent covering (19) and the reflector (22), as disclosed in Schenk, cooperate in any manner to couple the cover to the compartment body. Instead, Schenk clearly discloses that the flap (16) and the housing (11) are coupled by two pivot bearings (17) and not by a first connecting member integrally formed with the flap (16) and a second connecting member integrally formed with the housing (11). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Schenk fails to teach or suggest the combination of elements recited in independent claim 8 and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schenk in view of Anderson, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,158,353 to Kimisawa ("Kimisawa"). Although Applicants respectfully disagree, Applicants have amended claim 5 to more clearly define over Kimisawa. In particular, claim 5 has been amended to recite that the first electrical connector is "rigidly coupled to said compartment body" and the second electrical connector is "rigidly coupled to said support." Moreover, claim 5 has been further amended to recite that "said first electrical connector contacts said second electrical connector when said storage compartment is coupled to said support." Kimisawa fails to teach or suggest such a configuration as recited in claim 5. Instead, Kimisawa discloses a light emitting element (11) having a light emitting portion (11a) and lead wires (11b) that connect the light emitting portion (11a) to a battery. The lead wires (11b) are not rigidly coupled to either the card case (6) or the remainder of the vehicle body structure but move with movement of the card case (6). For this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 5 defines over Kimisawa and should be allowed.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing response including the amendments and remarks, this application is submitted to be in complete condition for allowance and early notice to this affect is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes any matter requires further discussion, the Examiner is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigned attorney so that the matter may be promptly resolved.

Applicant does not believe that any fees are due in connection with this response. However, if such petition is due or any fees are necessary, the Commissioner may consider this to be a request for such and charge any necessary fees to deposit account 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,
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